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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MFA OFFICIALS TELL EUR DAS BRADTKE AND STEPHENS
ITALY WANTS TO WORK WITH USG ON IRAQ UNSC RESOLUTION,
BALKANS

Classified By: DCM EMIL SKODON. REASON:1.4 (B)(D)

¶1. (C) Summary. On May 18, EUR Deputy Assistant Secretaries Bradtke and Stephens had productive exchanges with MFA officials on the present situation and way ahead in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans, and discussed prospects for a robust Istanbul summit agenda. Bradtke stressed the importance of strong transatlantic cooperation in the period ahead, particularly in working out a new UN Security Council resolution and supporting the transition of sovereignty in Iraq. The next 18 months will be an important period for Balkans stabilization; the US, NATO, UN and EU would be working together on critical issues such as SFOR-EU handover in Bosnia and decisions relating to Kosovo status. The next important step was reforming UNMIK, and identifying a strong successor to SRSG Holkeri. At the 28-29 Istanbul NATO Summit leaders must pledge support for the Iraq UNSC resolution. NATO must also be prepared to commit additional military resources in Afghanistan, both to support PRTs and the elections. End Summary.

¶2. (C) During a lunch hosted by the DCM, DAS Bradtke told an Italian delegation headed by European Affairs Director-General Giovanni Caracciolo that the next few months would be critical for Iraq's future and would also be a test of the strength of the transatlantic relationship. A number of upcoming events, including the UNSC Iraq resolution debate, the June 30 sovereignty transfer, PM Berlusconi's meetings in Washington and the President's trip to Europe next month, and the US-EU, G-8 and NATO summits, represented challenges and opportunities for the USG to work together with its European allies on crafting a solid foundation for a stable Iraq.

Balkans Stabilization

¶3. (C) DAS Stephens added that the next 18 months would also be an important period for Balkans stabilization, noting that the US, NATO, UN and EU would be working together on critical issues such as SFOR-EU handover in Bosnia and decisions relating to Kosovo status. She underlined that while the recent lethal violence in Kosovo was a setback to our efforts, it did serve to refocus attention on the need for a more secure environment in which the political process could advance, particularly in relation to the protection of Serb and other non-Albanian communities. Bradtke added that while the US was generally pleased with the EU-NATO negotiations on the delineation of responsibilities in Bosnia, German/French attempts to define the NATO presence as having less than full Dayton authority would be problematic for the US. NATO Office Director Giovanni Brauzzi assured Bradtke and Stephens that Italy fully concurred with the US on this point.

US-EU Cooperation

¶4. (C) Caracciolo agreed that there was no alternative to transatlantic cooperation. The government was doing all it could to overcome the "emotional" components distorting reality in the internal political debate over Italy's participation in Iraq. That debate is also being driven by rhetoric related to the June 12 EP elections. He also said that Europe has been absent of late from the MEPP, but he was encouraged by the most recent GAC conclusions calling for more robust EU participation in the process. He was also optimistic that renewed US focus on Southeast Europe would help overcome "Balkan fatigue" and noted that Belgrade was starting to be more flexible on Kosovo's final status, on the condition that the IC remains engaged in returns of Serb refugees and IDPs.

Kosovo

¶5. (C) Caracciolo insisted that stability in the Kosovo depended on steady IC pressure. "We can't rush" the process, he underlined. The next important step was reforming UNMIK, including identifying a strong successor to SRSG Holkeri.

The US and EU, perhaps through coordinated demarches, needed to speak with one voice to Belgrade authorities on the damage that a Radical party victory in upcoming elections would cause to Serbia's integration process. DAS Stephens agreed in principle to the suggested strategy, but said it should be done quietly and make clear to Belgrade ramifications of a Radical victory to its aspirations to join transatlantic

institutions. We should urge Kostunica to make clear that for the good of SaM's future, a democratic candidate has to prevail.

GAC Readout

16. (C) Director for EU Common Foreign and Security Policy Luigi Mattiolo had attended the June 17 GAC, and noted that there was growing awareness among the 25 EU Member State Foreign Ministers that transatlantic relations must move from their low point during the run-up to the Iraq war, to a higher level of cooperation on a wide range of issues - "a failure of one side is a failure for all sides" he said.

17. (C) Mattiolo said ministers at the GAC had agreed that a UNSC Iraq resolution was essential for continued, expanded and enhanced international cooperation in Iraq, but not sufficient to secure lasting peace. The August 19 bombing of the UN facility in Baghdad was "the UN's 9/11" averred Mattiolo, and the organization was still coming to grips with the fact that its operations can only be carried out successfully in a secure working environment. The US can count on the EU's support in this regard. Bradtke welcomed this spirit of cooperation, and predicted that it would be possible to work out a UNSCR that could gain unanimous support.

Istanbul Summit

18. (C) Bradtke said that it was only natural that political and military developments in Iraq would dominate the June 28-29 Istanbul NATO Summit. Leaders at the Summit must pledge support for the UNSC Iraq resolution. After approval of the UNSCR, we would need to look more closely at what NATO might do. NATO must also be prepared to commit additional military resources in Afghanistan, both to support PRTs and the elections. The Summit should highlight the end of SFOR as a success, and leaders will have to deal with the disappointment of the &Adriatic Three8, especially Croatia, that have high expectations for movement at the Summit on their membership aspirations. Those aspirants must be kept focused on progress through the Membership Action Plan (MAP) process. Bradtke also noted the strong feeling in Washington that until Sarajevo and Belgrade exhibit enhanced cooperation with the ICTY and in apprehending PIFWCs, PFP membership for Bosnia and SaM is out of the question.

19. (C) Bradtke noted that the US was now prepared to see Ukrainian President Kuchma invited to Istanbul for a NATO-Ukraine Commission, and the US would like to see Putin come for a NATO-Russia meeting. The U.S. did not see sufficient substance to warrant a NATO-EU Summit. Turkey's position that Cyprus and Malta would have to be excluded also made a NATO-EU meeting problematic for the US. Brauzzi agreed with Bradtke's view, and emphasized that the Summit should be seen as yet another mechanism for the US and Europe to "rediscover" their shared vision. He also concurred with Bradtke's proposal that the Summit conclusions should be comprised of three separate documents: a "leaders declaration" which would try to articulate a broader vision of transatlantic relations; a statement on Iraq; and a communique dealing with all other business.

Political Director's Views

10. (C) In a follow up meeting at the MFA, Political Director Giampiero Massolo told Stephens and Bradtke, who were accompanied by the DCM and PolMil Counselor, that Italy was working hard, on the EU level, to get US-European relations back on the right track - this work is one of PM Berlusconi's highest priorities. He hoped that concrete results and progress in Iraq after June 30, including a smooth transfer of sovereignty and a clearer definition of the UN's role, would help.

11. (C) Massolo agreed that the events of the past two weeks made chances for a broad NATO role in Iraq less likely, but he hoped the UNSC resolution would leave the door open for more international participation, perhaps along the lines of ISAF-3.

¶12. (C) Bradtke promised to consult with Italy on the drafting of summit documents. Massolo opined that Putin could be induced to come to the Summit if he could expect Russia to be given a role in Iraq.

¶13. (C) To the DCM's query on whether an acceptable UNSC resolution and productive Berlusconi/Bush meetings could sway Italians to be more supportive of Italy's role in Iraq, Massolo said that if these and other initiatives are successful, it would make it harder for the "left of the Left" to drive party policy, strengthening the hand of more moderate players. The June 12 European Parliamentary elections will be a somewhat accurate indicator of trends for support of government policy.

¶14. (C) Director for EU Common Foreign and Security Policy Mattiolo emphasized that "standards before status" in Kosovo has to be implemented in a transparent, efficient manner. He said that the IC must think creatively about final status - something less than full independence may be the answer, "perhaps an EU protectorate" but now is not the time to address that issue.

Next SRSG Kosovo

¶15. (C) Massolo raised the possibility of former UN Special Representative in southern Lebanon Steffan De Mistura as SRSG in Kosovo when Holkeri leaves in July. Italy had not formally nominated De Mistura, who according to Massolo, was "a little bit Italian, a little bit Swedish, and a little bit UN" but was interested in how he was viewed by the USG. Massolo noted that Commission President Prodi's advisor (and former Belgrade OSCE HOM) Sannino has also been suggested, but that FM Frattini's current thinking was that he was "too young." Stephens agreed to stay in touch on this issue.

¶16. (U) DAS Bradtke and DAS Stephens cleared this cable.

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